Statement of

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before the

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Committee on Science
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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Subcommittee today on the subject of NASA's cooperation with the Russian Federation in civil space. As highlighted by President Bush and Russian President Putin during their discussions on the first of this month in Saint Petersburg, "The loss of the Space Shuttle Columbia has underscored the historic role of the United States and Russia as partners in space exploration, who have persevered despite tragedy and adversity. During this challenging time, our partnership has deepened and the International Space Station (ISS) Program remains strong."

During the last decade, NASA has engaged in cooperative activities with Russia in the fields of aeronautics, Earth science, space science, and human space flight. The accomplishments have included the historic steps forward in human space flight by our astronauts and cosmonauts, as well as important projects such as our joint work on the study of the Earth's ozone layer, coordination of research on the Sun-Earth system, and cooperation on the study of Mars. For example, the Russian High Energy Neutron Detector (HEND) is an instrument on the NASA 2001 Mars Odyssey spacecraft. Since Odyssey arrived at Mars in October 2001, the HEND device has returned significant data regarding possible water on Mars.

Building a strong human space flight partnership with our colleagues in Russia has yielded many benefits. This has been particularly evident since the loss of Columbia on February 1, 2003. The redundancy and unique capabilities provided by Russian spacecraft have made it possible for the ISS Partnership to maintain a crew aboard the Space Station despite the grounding of the Space Shuttle fleet. This has also allowed the ISS Partnership to continue ISS operations and scientific research, and to prepare for a resumption of construction of the ISS, once the Space Shuttle fleet returns to flight status.

The challenges of the last four months have drawn the ISS Partnership, which also includes participation from Japan, Europe and Canada, into an even more effective integrated team. At the start of 2003, the ISS Partnership was well on its way to achieving ISS Core Complete on schedule in early 2004. 2003 promised to be a demanding year technically and managerially, as the Partnership planned to execute 5 Russian and 5 U.S. missions to the ISS, and closeout multilateral work on selecting an ISS configuration. Within hours of the tragic loss of Space Shuttle Columbia, the ISS Partners offered their full support and began work to address our new challenges. By the end of February, the Partnership had a new plan for interim operations while the Space Shuttle remained grounded. The Partnership has continued to implement this plan and update it as necessary. In particular, the Russian Aviation and Space Agency (Rosaviakosmos) has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to the ISS program by assuming increased responsibility for operational support of the ISS.

In early May, the Partnership executed the first ISS expedition crew exchange using Soyuz vehicles. Despite the necessity to re-train the crew for launch on Soyuz instead of on the Space Shuttle, the launch of Soyuz TMA-2 (ISS Flight 6S) was successfully accomplished on schedule. A week later the Expedition 6 crew executed the first return of U.S. astronauts on a Soyuz vehicle. During reentry the Soyuz TMA-1 executed a back-up reentry profile. Rosaviakosmos appointed a Commission to investigate this anomaly. The Commission reported on May 26, 2003, that the guidance system on the vehicle erroneously detected a malfunction and, in accordance with safety protocols, the system "failed safe" to the back-up re-entry profile. As another indication of our close partnership with Rosaviakosmos, NASA has been regularly briefed on the progress of the Soyuz investigation. Later this summer, a joint Russian-American team, led by Thomas Stafford, Lt. Gen. USAF (Ret.) and his Russian counterpart Nikolai Anfimov, will review the findings of the Russian Commission and report to the NASA Administrator and the General Director of Rosaviakosmos on the implications for ISS operational readiness. We are continuing to work closely with Russia in preparation for the next Soyuz crew exchange planned for October 2003.

The unwavering support of the ISS Partners has reaffirmed the strength and depth of our Partnership. NASA has conducted frequent consultations with its Partners as the Columbia accident investigation proceeds. These consultations are being held at all levels, including at the programmatic and technical level, through the Space Station Control Board; at the program management level, through the Multilateral Coordination Board; and at the Heads of Agency level. The ISS Partners have scheduled a Multilateral Coordination Board and Heads of Agency meeting for the end of July.

To date, near-term ISS operational plans and decisions taken by the Partnership have not resulted in a need for NASA to seek an exception to, or request an amendment of, the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000.

Mr. Chairman, NASA has conducted a broad range of cooperative civil space programs with Russia over the last decade. At present, our relationship with the Russian space program is strong and effective. We greatly appreciate the willingness of Russia, as with

all of our ISS Partners, to act decisively to address the challenges faced in the wake of the Columbia tragedy. Moreover, we look forward to resuming Space Shuttle operations so that we can continue the construction of the ISS and make full use of its remarkable capabilities.